The devil is in the DETAILS

Special Edition
January 2025

TRIBAL ART SOCIETY

ASIAN ART SOCIETY

WORLD ART SOCIETY

Cover Image:
detail of a Nepal mask presented
by Galerie Flak on p. 62

Special Edition
Jan 2025

For this first special edition of the year, we invite you to be surprised and enchanted by a selection of detailed images from our curated items. If you’re interested in seeing more images of a specific piece, please send us an email with the artwork's number in the subject line.

Already captivated at first glance and ready to make a purchase? Reach out directly to the art dealer presenting the piece. The gallery will provide all the additional information you need, along with plenty of images and videos to help you confidently bring this new treasure into your home.

Wishing you a year filled with beautiful and inspiring artwork throughout 2025!

01

A CUSHION COVER FOR THE BACK OF A THRONE

China
Qing period (1644 – 1911)
18th century
Counted-stitch embroidery on gauze, damask-weave for the lining. Silk
Height: 71 cm
Width: 72 cm
Provenance:
Moke Mokotoff (1950 – 2022), a noted Asian art dealer and collector based in New York.
Price: 5.000 USD

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VETTED BY:

ASIAN ART SOCIETY

This textile, made by means of meticulous counted-stitch embroidery on a gauze-weave base, and would have served to cover a cushion at the back of a throne. Yellow was the highest status color during the Qing dynasty, indicating a possible imperial context for the textile. The lining is also yellow in color, and features medallions containing a pair of five-clawed dragons surrounding the Chinese character for longevity (shou).

Auspicious symbols are also prevalent on the front of the cushion cover, and include lotus flowers in the border area, and a rock and a flowering tree, peaches, bats, peonies, a pair of fishes and a canopy inside the border. At the apex of the textile is a gourd, with a bat below, and above the gourd is a flowering vine.

02

AMIDA NYORAI

Japan
Heian/Kamakura period
12th/13th century
Lacquer and gilt wood
H. 50cm x W. 43cm x D. 36cm
(19½"" x 17"" x 14¼"")
Provenance:
Collection of Mrs. F. Perks, San Francisco, USA
Purchased from Gump's on 16th October 1965 and hence by decent to her daughter Mrs. J. Kedziora
Price on request

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A lacquer and gilt wood figure of a seated Amida Nyorai (Amitābha) dressed in a flowing robe

Accompanying documentation:
The original bill of sale and a copy of an appraisal letter (dated 26th Oct. 1965) showing the purchase price, an explanation of Buddhism and an expert opinion of this dating by Professor Yukio Yashiro (1890-1975), Director of the Institute for Art Research in Tokyo and Dr. Harold Sterne (1922-1977), Head Curator of Japanese Art at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D. C.

Old inscriptions inside the figure show signs of wear and are mostly illegible. However, they indicate that this figure was repaired after an accident and rededicated on the 16th August, in the 5th year of the Kansei era (1464).

The base bears a further inscription consisting of approximately a dozen names. Due to the high cost of producing Buddhist sculpture in this period, it was common for many donors to contribute to the construction of a single piece, giving them the opportunity to connect personally to a venerated Buddhist image. In particular in the Kinai area (ancient capital region), some regional feudal lords became donors for the construction of Buddhist sculptures from the 11th to 13th century and many Buddhist sculptures from this period with donors' names are known.*

Belief in Amida as Lord of the Western Paradise rose in popularity during the

late 10th century. Based primarily on the concept of salvation through faith, it was not only a religion appealing to a broad range of people, but also a direct assertion of piety against the dogmatic and esoteric ritual of the more traditional Tendai and Shingon sects. In Amida's Western Paradise the faithful are reborn, to progress through various stages of increasing awareness until finally achieving complete enlightenment.

Another factor that engendered faith in Amida was a widespread belief of the Three Periods of the Law known as the Days of the Dharma (the Buddhist teachings). This was an all-encompassing concept of society's rise and fall that originated in Indian Buddhism and later became widespread in China and Japan. It foretold of the world's ultimate decay and the complete disappearance of Buddhist practice. At the time, the Days of the Dharma in Japan were divided into three periods. The first phase, the Age of Shōbō, was said to last 1000 years after the death of the Buddha. It was believed to be a golden period during which followers had the capacity to understand the Dharma. The second phase, the Age of Zōhō, was also to last 1000 years, during which Buddhist practice would begin to weaken. The third and final phase lasting 3,000 years, the Age of Mappō, was when Buddhist faith would deteriorate and no longer be practiced. In Japan the Age of Mappō was said to begin in 1052 AD, and a sense of foreboding thus filled the land, with people from all classes yearning for salvation leading to a widespread practice of continuously repeating the mantra of Amida Buddha.

For a similar example dated 1133 in the Zenmyoji temple, Shiga prefecture, see Miho Museum et al eds., Omi: Spiritual Home of Kami and Hotoke, exhibition catalogue, (Kyoto, 2011), p.192, 246, no. 15.

03

AN ILLUSTRATION TO THE DEVI MAHATMYA: THE DEMON ARMY

Jaipur, India
Circa 1820-1840
Opaque watercolor heightened with gold on paper
Folio: 23,5 cm x 32,4 cm
Image: 17,1 cm x 27,3 cm
Provenance:
Bharany's Gallery 14 Sunder Nagar Market, New Delhi, India
Private collection, acquired from the above in 1978.
Exhibited:
Lycoming College Gallery; Williamsport Pennsylvania, 1981.
Price on request

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This painting depicts the demon army on its way to battle Devi. It appears that they are being led by the demon Nishumbha, as there is one clear leader surrounded by cronies, indicated by positioning and scale. Nishumbha is said to have battled Devi, first with a sword that she ultimately cut with a sharp-edged arrow that also split his shield, then with a hurled spear split in half by Devi's discus.

This present image shows Nishumbha en route to battle, as his sword and shield are still fully intact. The bright colors incorporated into this image are highly characteristic of the Jaipur school, wherein artists were skilled in using palettes like this to highlight bold figural detail and capture an emotion-filled atmosphere in a flat style.

04

BALINESE PAINTING

Temple Kamasan Painting
Bali
19th-early 20th century
Cotton, crushed mineral pigments
86 x 65 cm / 34 x 25.5 in
Provenance:
Ex Fischer Collection
Price on request

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The Garuda is a mythic bird of great size and power and serves as the mount of the Hindu deity Vishnu. Known to have stolen waters of the elixir of Life to save his mother, the Garuda is greatly venerated in Bali as brave and with a good heart and yet forever in a battle with his serpent enemies, the Nagas. This relatively large-scale Garuda depiction is particularly rich in iconography, and is painted on both sides of the canvas in an early Kamasan style with crushed mineral pigments.

05

BATTLE OF THE DEMON AND THE DRAGON

Iran
Siyah Qalam style
19th century
Gouache heightened with gold on paper
Image: 21 cm x 13 cm
Folio: 32 cm x 18,5 cm
Price on request

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Gouache on paper enhanced with gold mounted in album page, framed by "ebru" margins and two cartridges inscribed in "muhaqqaq" in black ink and in reserve on background gold. A demon and dragon fight, after Siyah Qalam, Iran, 19th century.

This drawing is inspired by the works of the artist Siyah Qalam who lived in the 15th century. During the Qajar period, many artists reinterpreted the iconography of the masters of Persian painting.

This artwork depicts a gruesome battle between a demon and a dragon in the style of Siyah Qalam, completed in 19th-century Iran. The figures are vertically framed by green *ebru* margins—a practice originating in Turkey, where “ebru” translates to “the art of clouds.” These organic marbled borders enhance the biomorphic forms of the entangled figures, rendered in gouache and heightened with gold. Two muhaqqaq inscriptions in black ink are placed within cartridges at the top and bottom of the composition. This piece draws inspiration from the works of Siyah Qalam, a 15th-century artist. During the Qajar period, artists frequently reinterpreted the iconography of Persian painting masters, bridging tradition with contemporary techniques.

06

BORO FUTON COVER

Japan
Mid 1800s - early 1900s
Cotton
47 x 47 in / 119.4 x 119.4 cm
Price on request

To get more images contact us:
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Like many examples of Japanese art, boro exemplifies the aesthetic of wabi-sabi 侘び寂び, or the beauty found in simplicity and imperfection. The irregular shape and surface variation of this futonji (futon cover) heighten the visual interest of this item. The patchwork of different fabrics including plain weave, striped, and checkered fabrics, the oldest and simplest types of weaves. The patchwork is reinforced with straight cotton stitches (sashiko) that stabilize the futonji and also reveal the multitude of layers of fabric. This item is part of a Japanese Boro Collection comprising 16 garments and flat cloths.

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07

BRONZE KAPPA

Shokaken (1849- ?)
Tokyo, Japan
Meiji era (1868-1912)
Dark brown patina bronze figure of a standing kappa with its right leg leaning on a cucumber. The figure is put on four-legged rattan-like bronze stand.
18,5 cm (h.) x 20 cm (w.) x 14 cm (d.)
Price on request

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The kappa (河童) is a aquatic creature taken from Japanese folklore having the appearance of an anthropomorphic turtle. His skull is either slightly hollowed out to accommodate water, from which it derives its power, or hidden with a water lily leaf hiding this sag. Naturally polite, it is advisable to bow to him in order that it should do so in return, thus losing all the water he has gathered and leaving it harmless. Kappa has the reputation of attempting to lure both humans and animals into the water. In some areas, it ravages fields, stealing eggplants and cucumbers. Some people prefer to worship it and give it offerings rather than be its victims.

Signed Shokaken (笑花軒). His real name is Ôshima Yasutarô. He was born in 1849 and is the third generation of a metalworkers family. Together with his brother Ôshima Joun (1858-1940) he ran a studio called Sanseisha (Shinagawa district, Tokyo) known for producing the finest bronzes. Shokaken exhibited his work in many international exhibitions, as for example an incense burner at the Vienna World Exposition in 1873, which is now in the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts and Contemporary Art in Vienna.

08

BULUL

Seated ancestor sculpture
Ifugao
North Luzon Island, Philippines
Late 15th century – early 16th century. C-14: A.D. 1482-1516, 94.50% Probability (by CIRAM)
Wood and porcelain
Height: 58 cm
Provenance:
Bernhard J. Orten collection, Mörfelden-Walldorf, Germany
Exhibitions:
Art Ifugao Sculpture: Expressions in Philippine Cordillera Art
UMAG,The University of Hong Kong, December 1, 2017-February 4, 2018
Publications:
Simplicity.Ifugao Sculpture. Power, Traditional Philippine Cordillera Art, Hong Kong University/Columbia University Press, December 2017, pp. 47
Price on request

To get more images contact us:
info@tribalartsociety.com

A figure of profound serenity, exquisite formal simplicity that emanates great inner strength. The veneration of ancestors is the key to the institutions of the mountain peoples originating from the island of Luzon. The stratification and social organization is based on these beliefs. The bulul sculptures represent those mythified ancestors to whom the members of the community turn to ask for advice and to conjure the protection of the fields and the good fortune of the community.

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09

DJENNE ORNAMENT

Prestige ornament
Djenne
Mali
12th century - 16th century
Copper alloy
Diameter: 14,5 cm
Provenance:
Private collection, France
Price: 5.000 euros

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Circular pendant that shows fine embossing work. The detail of the decoration reveals the great technical skill and knowledge of the craftsman. This piece was surely part of a large prestigious necklace worn by authorities or adorning their horses.

The Djenne civilization reached its peak during the 13th century. Thanks to its strategic location, it developed a great economy as a commercial center of utmost importance, which led to the growth of a wealthy social class that demanded jewels like these to be displayed and underline their status.

10

GHOST, A HANGING SCROLL PAINTING

"Attributed to Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), Nijubako (double storage boxes)
Japan
Circa 1770-1795
Silk, ink, textile hanging mount, wood (jikusaki)
Overall: 195 cm x 46 cm
Painting: 112 cm x 35 cm
Engraved on the box :
法隆寺 Horyuji [The Horyuji Temple, Nara]
Horyuji [Horyuji Temple, Nara]
Provenance:
Nanki Tokugawa-ke, shoga burui, Horyuji zoku no hitotsu hairyo, Ōkyo yurei no zu, No208
[A collection of the Kishu Tokugawa Family, no 208, this was formerly in collection at the Horyuji Temple (Nara), a painting of ghost by Ōkyo]
Price on request

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11

GILT-BRONZE BASIN

China
Han dynasty
(206 BCE–220 CE)
Diameter: 15,5 cm
Provenance:
Private Japanese museum
in Osaka
Price on request

To get more images contact us:
info@tribalartsociety.com

The inscription on the rim can be translated as: 'Made in the first month of the ninth year of the founding of the nation, on the day of Guiyou Shuo, for the prosperity of generations of children and grandchildren.'

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12

GREENLAND TUPILAK FIGURE

Tupilak shamanic figure
East Greenland
19th century
Carved wood and bone
Height: 15 cm – 6 in.
Provenance
Field-collected by Richard Bøgvad in 1932-1933 during Knud Rasmussen's Seventh Thule expedition
Dorotheum, Vienna, 15 Dec. 2020, lot 93
Philipp Konzett, Vienna, acquired at the above sale
Exhibition:
Soon to be exhibited at BRAFA Art Fair, January 26 - February 2, 2025, Booth 92
Price on request

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As noted by Richard Margolis, based on Robert Petersen's essay "Havd er en Tupilak" ("What is a Tupilak", Nov. 1967), for visitors to Greenland, the name "tupilak" signifies a small, grotesque carved figure carved. It usually has a body, head, and four limbs, but resembles several animals at the same time. It often has a distorted face, and not infrequently a skeletal ornamentation.

The tupilak (or tupilaq) is a spiritual entity summoned by the shaman to ensure its benevolence or, at the very least, its neutrality towards humans. In the 19th century and early 20th century, carved tupilak figures served as a privileged medium for telling stories and transmitting the myths and shamanic practices of Greenland.

The Tupilak figure presented here stands out for its evocative power and antiquity. It was field-collected in 1932-1933 by geologist Richard Bøvgad (1897-1952), a member of the renowned Sixth and Seventh Thule Expeditions led by Dr. Knud Rasmussen to southeast Greenland.

For an up-close encounter with this shamanic Tupilak figure, don't miss BRAFA Art Fair, where it will be exhibited at the Galerie Flak booth from January 26 to February 2, Brussels Expo, Belgium.

13

HAYASHI SHOTARO

Mountains
Glazed stoneware
D. 30 x 26 x H 39 cm
Price: 12.000 euros

To get more images contact us:
info@tribalartsociety.com

Born in Toki city, Japan in 1947, Hayashi Shotaro is a celebrated Japanese artist who specializes in ceramics. He is famous for his masterful Mino glazes, such as Shino, Oribe, and most notably, he is the contemporary pioneer of the uncommon “Manyosai” glaze. He is the recipient of the prefectural award of a Beholder of Intangible Cultural Property of the Mino prefecture. His robust forms are complimented by a softness of surface glaze that invites the viewer to relish the pleasures of the Shino technique.

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14

INRO DRAGON

Japan
Edo era (1603-1868)
Inro: 8 cm (h.) x 6 cm (l.) x 2,5 cm (D.)
Ojime: 2,5 cm (diameter)
Netsuke: 3,5 cm (h.) x 5 cm (l.)
Price on request

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Beautifull inro of six compartments made of lacquer, ranging from gold (maki-e) to black, but also grey using silver and tin powders. On each side is represented a dragon surrounded by black and silver clouds, the inside is made of nashi-ji lacquer. This variety of color texture is obtained by mixing raw lacquer with metallic powder and glitters (kirigane). Inro presented with its ojime and netsuke, representing a tiger with incrusted eyes, made of buffalo horn.

In Japan, the dragon (called Ryu) had been a

symbol of great importance and wealth for centuries. Most of the time he is believed to be a guardian or a genie. Indeed, the pearl that dragons are firmly holding in their claws is the physic materialization of their powers and a symbol of affiliation to the natural terrestrial and cosmic order. It is also said that the pearl is giving the dragon the ability to grant wishes to someone who gains its favor, by retrieving a lost pearl to its owner for instance. In addition, the fact that this inro is set to match a tiger netsuke is no accident, it is meant to recall the symbolic of both creatures when represented together. An ancient myth from the Hai-Duong province in today Vietnam tells us the story of a hermit that witnesses a fight between a white tiger and a golden dragon. This quarrel is to be settled by a verbal jousting, in which the dragon and the tiger proceed to present in metaphorical ways whom of them was the most influential figure to mankind, whether it was on civilization by being close to king and their dynasty or on culture and even geography, each one giving name to rivers or mountains. Eventually the stunned hermit decides to get off his mountain and to share what he saw with a mandarin with whom he used to debate. After a long discussion both get to the conclusion that both creatures are representing two fundamental cosmic energy, that are not opposite to each other but rather complementary, both yearning in equal proportions within all living and non-living things, such as the ying and yang concept shared in most Asia. Until the end of the Edo period, it was a theme for the elite, but with the economic growth of the Meiji era it became widely available in Japanese culture.

15

KANETA MASANAO

Untitled
2021
Glazed stoneware, Hagi glazes
D. 30 x 30 x 45 cm
Price: 14.000 euros

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16

KAPKAP

Solomon Islands
Melanesia
Diam.: 17,8 cm
Provenance:
Christies - May 94 - Important
Tribal Art New York Lot 29 (1994)
Joe Loux, San Francisco
Mark Eglinton, NY #4640
Cole Harrel, NYC
Price on request

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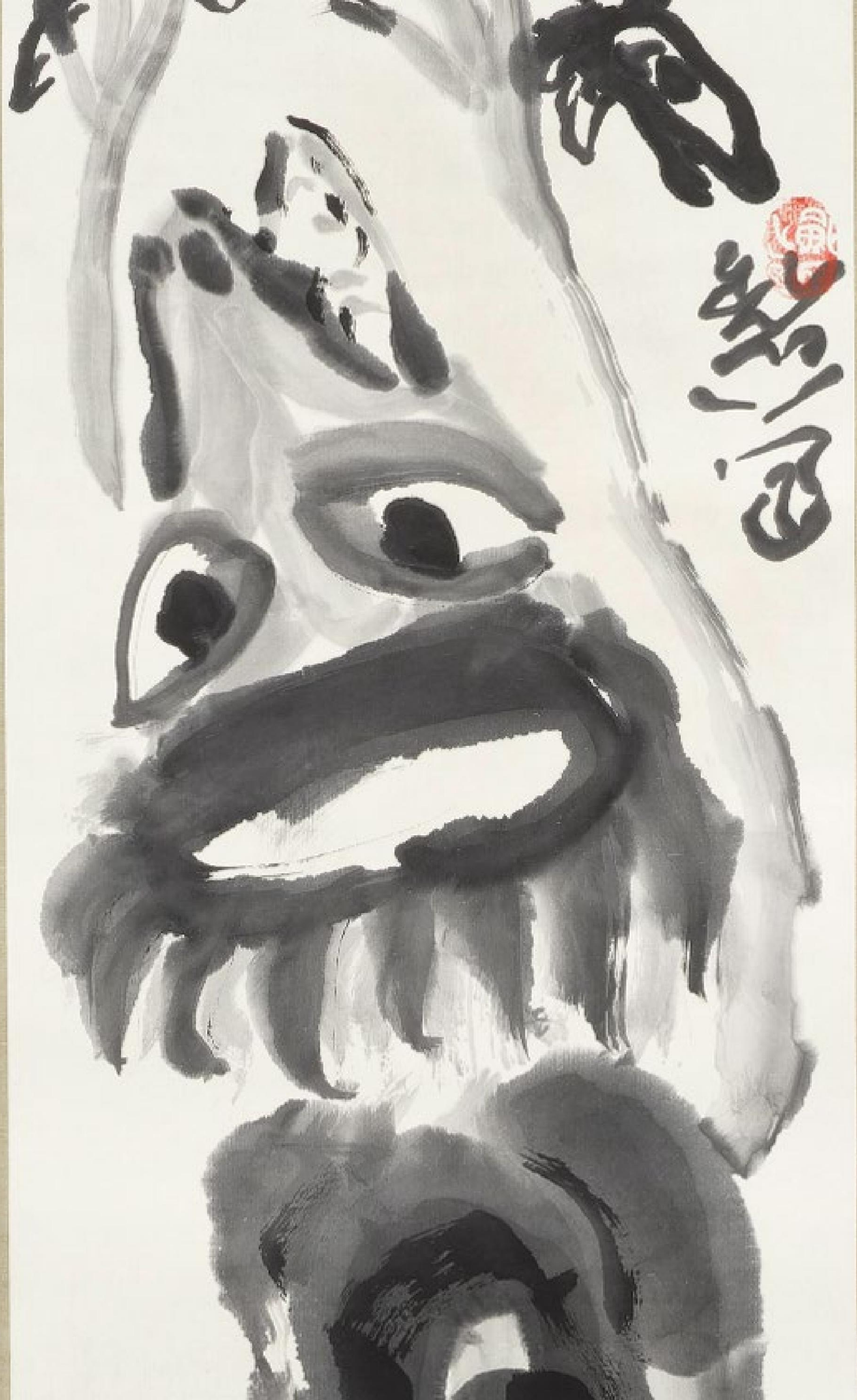

17

KAPPA (MYTHICAL WATER IMP) CATCHING A FISH UNDER THE WATER

Iwasaki Hajin (1917-2010), signed as Hajin sanso [Hajin, a priest in mountain] and seal: Hajin sanso [Hajin, a priest in mountain]
Japan
Circa 1970-2000
Overall: 198 cm x 45,5 cm
Painting: 135 cm x 33,5 cm
Paper, ink, textile mount and hanging (decorated with fish design), the Jikusaki is made of wood
Awasebako
Price on request

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Iwasaki Hajin was an original Japanese painter of the Showa-Heisei periods. Born in 1917, Tokyo. He graduated from the Kawabata School of Painting and studied under Kobayashi Kokei. Iwasaki Hajin was selected for the Nitten Exhibition in 1938; he was instrumental in founding the Japan Expressionist School in 1932. He was ordained as a priest at Zenrin-ji Temple in Kyoto, 1952 and devoted himself to Buddhist iconography and ink painting. He died in May 2010, at the age of 92. His original given name: Yasuhiko. His works include Hyakki Yakozu (Night Parade of One Hundred Demons) and in the collections of many important museums and private collections.

18

KITSUNE-JA NOH THEATER MASK

Japan
Edo period
18th Century
Wood, gofun and pigments
14.5 x 20.5 cm / 5.7 x 8 in
Box : Awasebako
Price on request

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This mask features a powerful yet subtle aesthetic. It represents the Noh character of the Fox Demon of Sesshöseki and the Fox Spirit of Kokaji. This mask is a rarely encountered subject that is worn for Kishin roles.

19

KOTA

Gabon
19th/early 20th Century
Wood, copper and brass
Height: 27cm
Provenance:
Tao Kefeoff, Paris
Lucas Ratton, Paris
Bernard Dulon, Paris
Yvonnet Collection , Saint-Jean-de-Luz
Price on request

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20

LACQUER BOX AND COVER

Japan
Meiji Period
Late 19th century
Lacquer, wood, gold
8 cm (h) x 22 cm (w) x 18 cm (d)
Provenance:
Private UK collection
Price on request

To get more images contact us:
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VETTED BY:

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An Extremely Fine Quality Lacquer Box and Cover with Internal Tray depicting a mountainous landscape with bridges, fast flowing rives, wooded landscape with lily-pad filled lagoons.

21

LACQUER WRITING BOX

Kyoto, Japan
Circa 1680
10 cm (h.) x 53,5 cm (w.) x 39,5 cm (Diam.)
Provenance:
Lady Mary Marchioness of Devonshire and 1st Baroness Sandys of Ombersley (1764-1836)
thence by descent
Publication:
A. Oswald, ""Ombersley Court, Worcestershire - III"", in: Country Life, 16 January 1953, p. 153, pl.
Price on request

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The writing box has bevelled edges and a kabusebuta (overhanging lid), and is completely covered in black lacquer in maki-e and decorated in gold, silver and red hiramaki-e and takamaki-e of superb quality.
The lid is decorated with a scene of fishermen pulling onto the shore a net with their catch, in a landscape with a village.
More fishermen can be seen fishing in their boats on the water in the back, as well as many moored fisherboats and mountain scenes withbuildings in the background

22

LAWLE GONG-STRIKER

Figure
Baule
Ivory Coast
Early 20th century
Wood, cotton and vegetal fibers
Height: 24,5 cm
Provenance:
J.P. Delcourt, France
G.F. Scanzi (1936-2017), Italy
Publications:
L'anima delle piccole cose, arte del quotidiano in Costa d'Avorio. Castello d'Albertis, Genova, Museo delle Culture del Mondo. De Ferrari, Italia 2007, p. 55.
Price: 3.000 euros

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The diviners of the Baule, as well as of other Akan ethnic groups in the Ivory Coast, carried with them during ceremonies a small iron gong and its hammer, the sound of which would plunge them into a deep trance. Although the gongs are always of a simple bell shape, the hammers come in a wide variety of shapes and styles.

23

MORITA SHIRYŪ

Ryū (dragon)
Signed, titled and dated 1965 on a label affixed to the reverse, framed
Aluminum flake pigment in polyvinyl acetate medium and yellow alkyd varnish on paper and wood panel
with frame H. 161cm x W. 82.5cm (63½" x 32½")
painting H. 157.5 cm x W. 80cm (62¾" x 31½")
Published in: Inada Sōsai ed., Morita Shiryū: Catalogue Raisonné, 1952–1998, (Kyoto, 2019), no. XVII-504
Price on request

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Morita Shiryū was born in Toyooka, Hyogo Prefecture and studied sho (calligraphy) under the influential and ground-breaking calligrapher Ueda Sōkyū (1899-1968). Sōkyū was a charismatic teacher introducing his talented pupils to avant-garde sho and its definition as the art of the line.

Having received numerous awards from important Japanese exhibitions such as the 1937 Inten (Japan Art Institute Exhibition) where he won the Tokusen silver award, Morita became more and more fascinated with the performance involved in the writing of sho and the similarities between the expressive calligraphic line and what was developing within the Abstract Expressionist art scene of the West. In 1948 he launched the magazine Shonobi (beauty of calligraphy) under the leadership of his master Ueda Sōkyū with the intention of promoting avant-garde sho. The notion of abstraction had been part of the practice of East Asian calligraphy for many centuries, and Morita often wrote about the interplay between traditional Japanese calligraphy and abstract art in the West. These observations were catalogued in a second journal entitled Bokubi which was first edited and published by Morita in 1951 and featured an image of a calligraphic painting by Franz Kline on its cover. Distributed internationally, the journal became extremely influential within the Western art world, causing a further interest in the Japanese aesthetic followed by an array of collaborations and international exhibitions with European artists of the Abstract Expressionist

movement such as Pierre Alechinsky (b.1927) and Georges Mathieu (1921-1912), and American artists Mark Tobey (1890-1976) and Franz Kline (1910-1962). With the help of such innovative publications and the possibility of international exposure, modern Japanese calligraphers such as Morita and fellow like-minded artist Inoue Yūichi soon became an international sensation.

In 1952, five disciples of Ueda Sōkyū including Morita co-founded the legendary Bokujinkai (Society of Ink People). He joined forces with Inoue Yūichi (1916-1985), Eguchi Sōgen (1919-), Sekiya Yoshimichi (b.1920) and Nakamura Bokushi (dates unknown) and together they further advocated the emancipation of the calligraphic line away from its traditional form and experimented using unorthodox materials. The beauty of the line itself is held as a self-evident attribute and the execution of the writing becomes the focus. Morita placed the performance of a piece at the centre of his definition of calligraphy. The kanji character is written in one defining moment with confident strokes. The calligrapher penetrates to a deeper level of understanding and the character is understood in a different, more profound way.

In terms of style and format, Morita Shiryū's works are groundbreaking. He preferred to use an oversized brush, working quickly across the surface. Whilst works such as the example presented here may appear to be executed using the rather slow process of Japanese lacquer, in actuality the metallic silver paint is applied swiftly onto the surface and later covered with a coat of fast drying yellow varnish achieving a similar effect. Morita's vigorous style often results in abstract forms which no longer appear to be recognisable characters yet they retain their original essence enhanced with a new vitality.

Works by the artist can be found in the collections of: The Art Institute of Chicago; St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri; Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio; Freer Sackler Gallery, Washington DC; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis; M+, Hong Kong; The National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Hyogo; Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum; Kyoto Municipal Museum of Art.

24

MUMUYE FIGURE

Ritual figure
Mumuye
Nigeria
Early 20th century
Carved wood and pigments
Height: 72 cm – 28 ¼ in.
Provenance
Alain Javelaud collection, Fontenay-sous-Bois
Leridon collection, Paris
Published :
“Mumuye”, François Neyt, Editions L’Enfance de l’Art, Paris, 2006, p. 156
Soon to be exhibited at BRAFA Art Fair, January 26 - February 2, 2025, Booth 92
Price on request

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The late discovery of Mumuye art in Europe at the end of the 1960s was nothing short of a revelation. Mumuye statuary from northeastern Nigeria continually pushes the boundaries of its treatment of the human form, offering a captivating sense of movement, rhythmic disruptions and elongations, and a masterful interplay of negative and positive spaces. These qualities have drawn comparisons to the work of major 20th-century artists such as Henry Moore and Alberto Giacometti. According to Belgian anthropologist Jan Strybol ("see Les Mumuye" in Arts du Nigeria: Collection du Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie - 1997), figurative sculpture enhanced the influence and reputation of leaders and religious specialists in Mumuye society by furthering their efforts to predict the future, heal the sick, and make rain fall.

A collection of over 15 Mumuye statues, including the one shown here will be exhibited at the Galerie Flak booth from January 26 to February 2, Brussels Expo, Belgium.

25

NEPAL MASK

Monkey mask
Teraï region – Nepal
19th century or earlier
Carved wood and pigments
Height: 25,5 cm
Provenance:
Frédéric Rond, Paris
Alain Bovis, Paris
Exhibition:
Soon to be exhibited at BRAFA Art Fair, January 26 - February 2, 2025, Booth 92
Price on request

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The masks from the Middle Hills of Nepal and the regions bordering the Himalayas reveal an iconographic diversity steeped in strength and mystery. By the early 20th century, the original purposes of these masks had already faded from memory. Were they representations of ancestors, demons, or mythological figures? The possibilities remain as boundless as the imagination. Their connection to shamanism remains speculative, and their precise ceremonial functions continue to elude us.

These masks serve as tangible witnesses to the intricate web of human, spiritual, and artistic exchanges that have shaped the Himalayas, a crossroads between China and the Indian subcontinent. Over the centuries, Buddhism, Hinduism, and animist cultures have all left their imprint weaving myths, magico-religious practices, and theatrical elements into the iconography of these masks.

The inventiveness of the artists and their ingenious 'plastic solutions,' to borrow an expression dear to Jacques Kerchache, reflect a deep understanding of form and function, where the masks are not mere representations but also serve as vehicles for storytelling, ritual, and cultural identity.

Whether human or chimerical, serene or near-trance, baring teeth or introspectively turned, these masks challenge us. They appear to dance on the edge where the visible and invisible worlds meet, evoking questions that transcend time.

To discover a selection of rare, ancient Nepalese masks up close, we cordially invite you to visit our booth at the BRAFA Art Fair, from January 26 to February 2 at Brussels Expo, Belgium.

26

NIAS STANDING FIGURE

Male Figure with a Stylised Palm Crest and a Scroll Back Knot, Ribbed Necklace, Crossed Arms and Erect Penis
Raised upon its original base
titled: in typical 'yellow' paint
'Sumatra'
Nias
Indonesia
19th century
Wood
Provenance:
William Downing Webster (1868 - 1913)
Lieut. General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers (1827 - 1900)
Price on request

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The Pitt Rivers archives record this figure in Volume 4, pl. 1343, as 'Bought of Webster' on October 20th 1896. The entry lists 'two wooden carved Sumatra Idols, male and female' and with watercolour drawings of both showing two views. They were exhbited at the Farnham Musuem, room, 9, case no. 104.

27

NORTH WEST COAST CARVING

Fragmentary Argillite carving
North West Coast
Mid 19th century
Price on request

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28

PAINTING OF MANDALA OF SAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

Japan
Edo period (1603–1868)
34,3 cm (h.) x 26 cm (w.)
Provenance:
Private Japanese collection
Price on request

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Mounted as a scroll with brocade borders, old Japanese wood box with an inscription on the outside referring to a painted mandala, the interior lid inscribed with reference to a 90-year-old high-ranking Buddhist title.

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29

SAMOAN TAPA

Tapa cloth
Samoa, Polynesia
19th century
Price on request

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30

SCROLL OF A YUREI (GHOST)

Japan
Showa period
Ink on paper
Overall: 205 (h) x 60 cm
177 (h) x 46,5 cm
Price on request

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31

SHIVA AS TRIPURANTAKA, THE DESTROYER OF TRIPURA

Mandi, India
Circa 1750-1780
Opaque watercolor heightened with gold on paper
Image: 18,6 cm x 24,3 cm
Folio: 22,9 cm x 29,2 cm
Provenance:
Royal Mandi collection.
The estate of Carol Summers (1925-2016).
Price on request

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The narrative illustrated here is that of Shiva as the destroyer of Tripura, the three mythical demon cities in the sky. Tripura was gifted by Brahma to the evil demon Taraka's three princely sons as reward for undertaking severe penance. These impenetrable fortresses revolved around the sky and could only be destroyed by an arrow that could merge the three cities and set them ablaze. With these boons, the three princes abused their power, wreaking havoc across the universe and taunting the gods. Unable to stand against the princes' power, the gods begged Shiva for help.

In order to defeat the Tripura, Shiva crafted his weapons from pieces of the other gods. His chariot, made from the earth, is depicted here, upheld by wheels made from the sun and the moon. Brahma, the Creator, with four heads and four arms, is his charioteer. Shiva's bow, made from Meru the mountain, is strung with the serpent Vasuki, who can also be seen wrapped around Shiva's neck. Shiva's cosmic arrow, which he used to destroy all three cities in a single shot, is made from Vishnu, the Protector, his blue face appearing on the tip of the arrow.

Tripura is not depicted as three separate cities, but instead, is personified into demon form. The scaled pattern on the demon's skin serves to represent the earth, and can also be seen on Shiva's mountainous bow. Scattered across the demon's chest and legs are buildings and animals, indications of the floating cities merged into flesh. This sort of representation helps to visualize Shiva's foe, not simply

as three fortresses, but as a formidable enemy. It can also be taken to symbolize the Tripura's metaphorical meaning as the three components of man: the physical body, the intellect, and the soul. By destroying the Tripura, Shiva is said to have merged the three essential components of man into the supreme consciousness.

The reverse of this folio contains Devanagari numerals '48' and bears a stamp and inventory number from the Royal Mandi Collection.

32

TAMBU

Tolai
Gazelle Peninsula , Papua New Guinea
Shell, wood and fiber
Diam.: 60 cm
Provenance:
Private collection, USA
Ex Chris Boylan, Australia
Price on request

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थेनाशंमनस्तापंसुतनाशंमहाभयंमरणंशोकस
करेणविनिर्दिशेत्

33

THE BOAR

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India
Opaque pigments on paper
Image: 22,2 cm x 17,8 cm
Folio: 25,5 x 21,6 cm
Provenance: Christie's
Amsterdam, 12 October 1993, lot 34
Christie's London, 12 June 2018, lot 28
Exhibited:
"Indian Miniature Paintings" c.1590–c.1850, Amsterdam, 1 October–30 November 1987, no.23
Published:
J. Bautze, Indian Miniature Paintings c.1590–c.1850, exhibition catalogue, Amsterdam, 1987, no.23, p.61.
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Inscribed in Sanskrit:

Loss of property, mental anguish,
Death of sons, terrible fear,
Death, sorrow, suffering:
A boar indicates all this.

"Translated by Dr. Harsha Dehejia"

The present image depicts a lone boar, standing at the river's edge. Its finely rendered hair and almost human eyes belie a robust figure with dangerously pointed tusks. The rust colored sky creates an ominous air—a sense of danger. According to the Sakunavali, the boar, categorized as 'neshta,' is an ill omen.

The rendering of the landscape, with the river's zigzagging indentation of the foreground, and the differentiated colored background in rust and blue, are conventions of the Sangram Singh period. Compare the treatment of the water's edge to a folio from the Sat Sai, produced in the same workshop (see A. Topsfield, Court Painting at Udaipur Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar, Zurich, 2002, p. 144, fig. 116).

34

THE MASTER OF THE WATER, PINE AND STONE RETREAT

Neidan - Alchemy within the Stone, 2016
Ink and water-colours on cloud-dragon paper mounted down on *xuan* paper
124 x 230 cm
Price on request

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With four seals of the artist, *Shuisongshi shanfang* ('The Water, Pine and Stone Retreat'), *Ruru Jushi* ('The retired scholar who believes that all doctrines are equal'), *Zhuxu laoren* ('Old man as Empty Inside as Bamboo'), and *Shikuang* ('Stone Fool').

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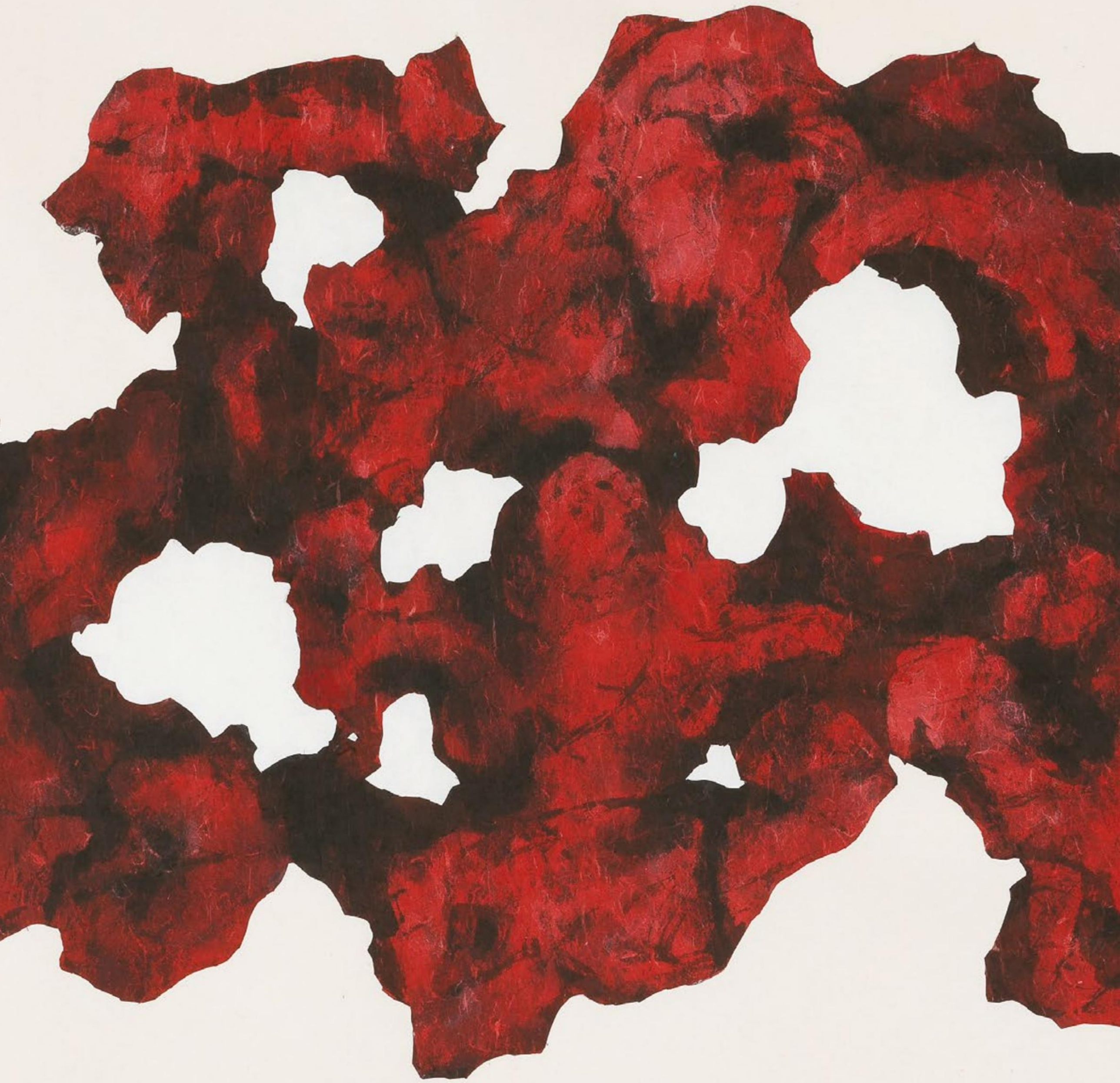

35

TWO-FOLD PAPER SCREEN

Japan
Meiji period
19th century
ink and colour on a gold ground
H. 170cm x W. 188cm
(67"" x 74¼"")
Price on request

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A two-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a gold ground with red and white chrysanthemums behind a brushwood fence, both rendered in moriage (raised design)
By the Heian period (794-1185), chrysanthemums or kiku were cultivated as ornamentals in Japan while the plant's medicinal qualities have been celebrated since pre-Nara period (pre-710). The Edo period (1603-1868) was a time when gardening boomed and from the early Edo period, as enthusiasm for gardening grew, various species of chrysanthemums were produced and the flower shows for new types of chrysanthemums called kikuawase (chrysanthemum matching) were also held amongst the people. Japanese interest in chrysanthemum as a theme for poetry also developed during the Heian period. At that time, with the evolution of a native artistic sensibility heavily influenced by the passing seasons, the flower gained its place as one of the premier symbols of autumn. In many instances, the flower appears in ensemble motifs with all or some of the Seven Grasses of Autumn, and it is sometimes included in enumerations of this group. The first use of chrysanthemum as a symbol of the Japanese Emperor and the Imperial family occurred in the thirteenth century when Emperor Go-Daigo adopted the flower as a crest and it was continued by successive Emperors. Later many commoners also used chrysanthemum as a family crest, and a Matsuya store catalogue of 1913 included 95 crest designs based on this flower.

36

ZULU GOURD

Zulu
South Africa
19th century
Wire work
Price on request

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